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ABSTRACT

An interview study examined the assumptions about adult learning held by 28 educational policy-makers, researchers, and staff developers. Fifteen assumptions were inferred from the interview data, each forming a dimension that describes learning as experienced by the participants: (1) Adult learning experiences are envisioned as similar for all individuals; (2) Designs for adult learning through staff development are based upon the learning styles of the designer; (3) If an activity or experience cannot be assigned meaning, learning does not occur; (4) Meaning is established by the interaction of experience and purpose; (5) Experience must be processed through self-reflection, analysis, and critique; (6) The creation and resolution of cognitive dissonance is a critical element in learning; (7) Learners seek cognitive dissonance; (8) Significant learning results in the transformation of the self; (9) The emerging self and learning are synergistically related; (10) Relationships are important in the emergence of the self; (11) Learning is a process of emancipation; (12) Learning is a self-directing process; (13) Adult development is not automatic, but is a function of emancipation, purpose, and self-critique; (14) How adults learn, derive meaning, identify interests, and find purpose is not considered developmental; and (15) Language development and thought are interrelated and important to self-direction. Implications drawn from these assumptions are explored in the areas of higher education, learning in the workplace, staff development, and adult learning and networking. (JD)

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HOW ADULTS LEARN: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF LEADING RESEARCHERS, POLICY MAKERS AND STAFF DEVELOPERS

by

Linda Lambert

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HOW ADULTS LEARN: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF LEADING RESEARCHERS, POLICY-MAKERS AND STAFF DEVELOPERS

by Linda Lambert, Ed.D.

What personal learning experiences led Bruce Joyce to his work in teacher coaching? What driving forces captivate Ralph Tyler and John Goodlad? What influences the learning that Madeline Hunter and Jane Stallings design for others? The personal learning experiences and styles of the participants in this study form a major portion of the state-of-the-art in staff development today.

This interview study examined the assumptions about adult learning held by its 28 participants. The policy-makers, researchers and staff developers in the study includes such educational leaders as Goodlad, Joyce, Stallings, Tyler, Hunter, Gary Hart, Elliot Eisner, Paul Berman, Delmo Della Dora and Wilson Riles among others.

Background

During the last ten to fifteen years, declining student enrollment has resulted in a myriad of problems for American education. The most glaring issue has been the accompanying inability to bring new teachers into the system. New teachers had historically meant new ideas, a continuing confrontation of the old and the new, a challenge to the firming-up of traditionalism. Less obvious, but perhaps as insidious, were some other ripples created by this single phenomenon. Fewer students in schools meant that more and more of the community out there did not have children in the schools. Therefore, resources declined

as voters supported such measures as California's Proposition 13 and demanded services that competed for the scarce dollars. From all layers of the economy, financial support dwindled while inflation exploded. The tightening economy also meant fewer opportunities for job mobility. Dissatisfied or less than competent teachers no longer saw or sought a "way out." While retention of dissatisfied teachers was creating a smoldering system, retention of all students in school through high school added embers to the pyre of growing public dissatisfaction with education. Quite eagerly, the legislature and media began to articulate what they understood (probably correctly) this dissatisfaction to be. "Johnny Can't Read!" cried the press. "Our schools aren't doing the job" echoed the law makers as one reform bill after another paraded through the legislative halls.

A bleak picture has been painted: mature teachers, unchallenged by new ideas, many feeling trapped in the system, dealing with many students who don't belong there or don't want to be there. What is the answer, or, at least, an answer? Staff development is recognized as the one ingredient with self-feeding potential.

> If the education profession is to flourish and if schools are to be a vital force in society, it is necessary to rebuild the school into a lifelong learning laboratory not only for children but for teachers as well (Joyce 1981: 117).

This emerging vision, which is shared by growing numbers in the education community, can serve as a field in which theory and practice is negotiated. This study sought to understand what visions are shared and how these visions enable policy-makers,

researchers and staff developers to integrate theory and practice.

Conceptualization

A review of the current literature on adult learning pictures the adult as an autonomous, goal-oriented, moral-laden problem solving individual (Newton, 1977). This description, however, leaves many unanswered questions: why do some people, at some point, stop growing? Why don't all adults reach higher cognitive stages? While the current thinking of developmentalists is sufficiently liberated from the pedagogical assumptions of old, it does not adequately account for the broad differences we see in adult learning.

What is needed, at this time, is an enriched image of the learning process. Such a visualization would necessitate a new language with which to think and talk about this image. The limitations born of such terms as hierarchy, sequential, level, stage, developmental, continuum must be cast aside so that new reference will enable us to capture yet an altered image.

Learning is imagined as a vast, interactive universe in which "many roads lead to Nirvana," where there is a "tendency to exist" in a particular way. Undoubtedly an adult making this circuitous journey as described passes through similar phases, some pausing, some moving on, some becoming "stuck" by their own needs and defenses. It is a journey that provides a new image. If the journey can be said to imply a goal, it might well be that adult learning is a struggle to be free, to be emancipated from

the shackles that interfere with an individual's growth. This interest in emancipation forms a unity of perspective that informs this study.

The current findings on adult learning do share some common patterns that form one perspective of this research. In addition, a critique of the current language and concepts has yielded some new images and language. Together, these perspectives form the bases of the prejudged categories that constitute one dimension of analysis. These perspectives are differentiation, meaning, cognitive dissonance, self, developmental patterns, and culture.

Although the current findings and thinking on adult learning explore many of the previous myths of this arena and open new vistas, these findings have not as yet been effectively wedded with staff development rationale and operational models. Where must that marriage take place? Undoubtedly in the minds of those who influence policy and practice in the field of staff development. This understanding is the intent of this study.

Methodology

Participants in this study were selected based on criteria related to their action and influence in the field of staff development. In-depth personal interviews were scheduled. (A list of participants is attached.) Questions were framed for entry into multi-dimensional levels so that inferences could be made about the assumptions held. Participants were asked to

reflect upon their own thinking, thereby providing an opportunity for negotiated analysis through discussion and collaboration.

Interview data were analyzed from two perspectives, an analysis of the participants' assumptions on adult learning as viewed through the dimensions of differentiation, meaning, cognitive dissonance, self, developmental patterns, and culture; and analysis of the language and metaphor that interact to construct assumptions.

Findings

Fifteen assumptions were inferred from the interview data. Each assumption forms a dimension that describes learning as experienced by the participants. It is critical to note that participants projected their own assumptions about learning onto others. This is not to say that they did not differentiate themselves from others, but that they thought that others were capable of experiencing learning similarly.

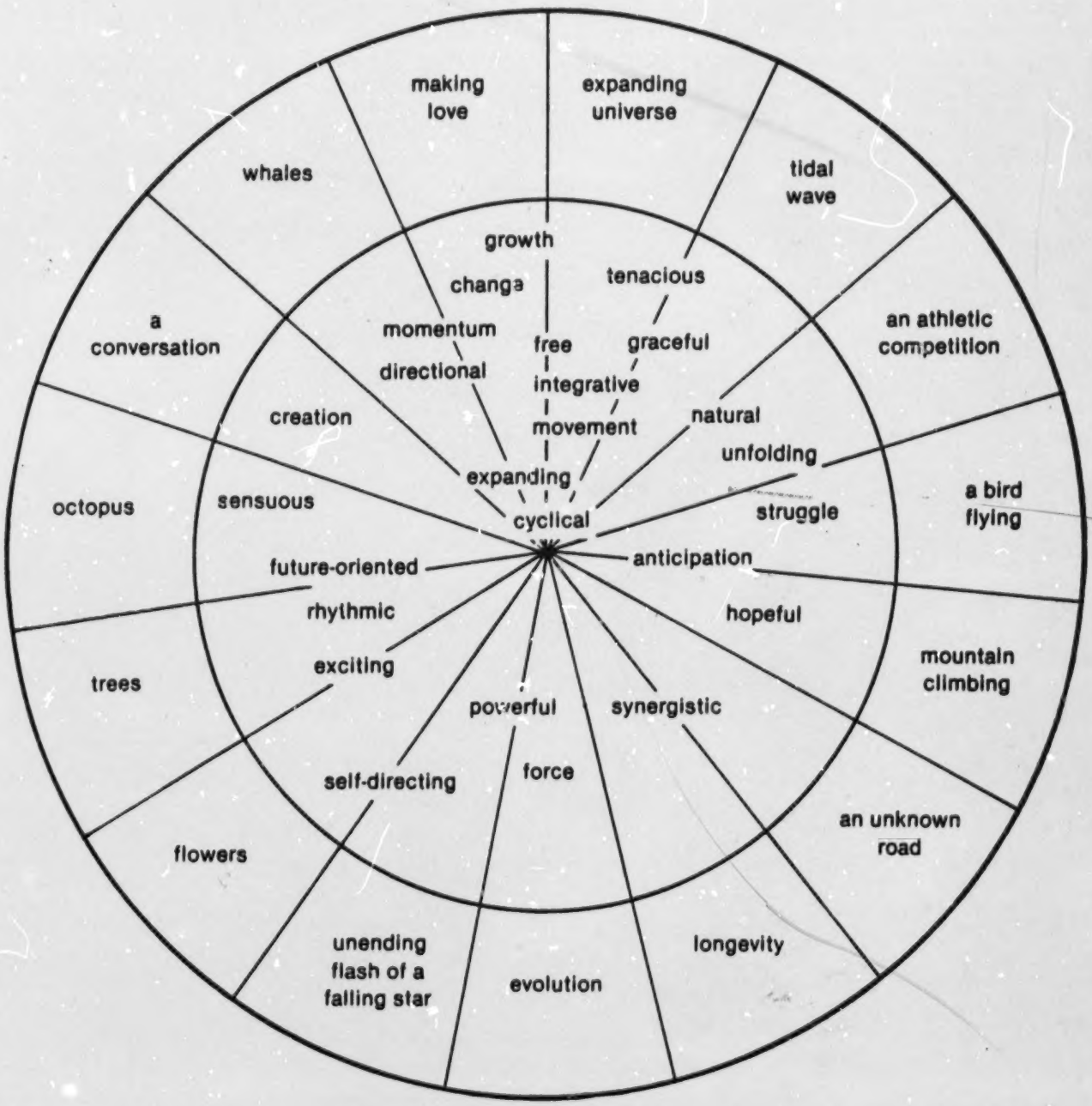
The assumptions are listed below, followed by a description of those learning dimensions.

ASSUMPTION 1: Adult learning experiences are envisioned as similar for all individuals.

The participants described outstanding learning experiences as growth, synergistic and emancipatory in its process. The language of metaphor confirmed that unity of perspective. The chart on Shared Metaphorical Entailments (Chart I) provides a visualization of this common understanding. The inner circle includes meanings common to all metaphors.

CHART I

SHARED METAPHORICAL ENTAILMENTS



These images of learning were used in reference to what were thought to be "significant" learning experiences; that is, transformative in their quality. Significant learning - significant growth - means being different, as Joyce and Berman explain:

> . . . Significant growth - significantly different. You're not just adding to what you already are. (Joyce)
>
> . . . the highest level [of learning] means really changing your whole pattern of being . . . It means being different in transformation. (Berman)

ASSUMPTION 2: <u>Designs for adult learning through staff development are based upon the learning styles of the designer (participant)</u>.

The learning styles of the participants was the primary force that determined their actions in the field of staff development. The primary style differences lie in the following areas: 1) sequential, modular learners vs. the holistic learner, 2) observational learner vs. the experiential learner, 3) rational, logical learner vs. intuitive learner.

Samples of this distinction are:

<u>sequential, modular</u>

"I break it into small meaningful pieces, pull out the key concepts, check to see whether I know that before I move on."

<u>holistic</u>

"I'll take a look at the whole thing and I'll think about it a long time and then everything will just fall into place together."

<u>field independent</u>

"I'm more of a looker, a listener, my style is that I observe . . . I think growing up reading alot . . . makes you a little more . . . introspective."

<u>field dependent experiential</u>

"Once I've done something experientially and have talked about it and solved the problem, then I can talk about it, read about it, give mearing to the experience."

rational, logical	intuitive
. . . present them with evidence that would cause them to question their own point of view . . . I think you're convinced by your brain, not by your emotions."	I have developed an intuitive ability over and above what I used to be. I've really started paying attention to that."

Understanding these dichotomies in learning style is critical to understanding how learning experiences are designed for others.

Three clusters of staff development approaches were identified from the preferences of the participants. Below, those approaches are seen as expressions of participant learning styles.

Staff Development Approach	Learning Style	Participants
school improvement collaborative problem-solving	field dependent experiential holistic	Goodlad, Joyce, Miles, Bond, Miller, Della Dora, Lambert, Roberts, Berman, Bundy, Eisner, Tyler, Hart
instructional methodology product-oriented	sequential field independent rational, logical	Hunt, Scrofani, Knight, Horan, Choye, Guilkey, Tyler, Mesa, Stallings
teacher-center teacher-advisor (as personal growth models)	holistic field independent experiential intuitive	Kent, McCaffree, Galagaran, Lambert, Costa, Joyce, Roberts, Berman, Vasconcellos

Obviously, these categories are not discrete nor are they all encompassing. Many of the participants in this study understand this bias to a particular style and actively seek to broaden the base for learning and accommodate other styles. For instance, Madeline Hunter immerses her instructional methodology in an approach that includes support, interaction, coaching and

feedback. Jane Stallings includes a research foundation joined by support, opportunities to analyze discrepancies, interaction, and peer observation and feedback. Many who advocate a school improvement approach, such as John Goodlad, Elliot Eisner, and Delmo Della Dora also include the instructional methodology approach as an integral part. An important distinction is that, in spite of the accommodation for alternate styles, the focal point from which dissonance in learning is measured in the sequential (modular) is an established authority (in this case, research) base. The group concensus, problem-solving, or inquiry models (school improvement) begin with the hypotheses of the participants - that which emerges from experience, purpose and meaning within a given mileau. This is the critical difference. The "personal growth" models are similar to the school improvement, although focused on the renewal of the individual rather than (but not necessarily instead of) the institution. There was evidence to suggest that some credence can be given to these patterns as a means of enhancing our understanding of staff development actions.

ASSUMPTION 3: <u>If an activity or experience cannot be assigned meaning, learning does not occur</u>.

ASSUMPTION 4: <u>Meaning is established by the interaction of experience and purpose</u>.

As Stallings pointed out, and others echoed, "If you don't make the connection, learning doesn't occur." The place of meaning in learning is of intense interest to the participants. Their language reveals that interest:

. . . I take it and rehearse it and translate it into meaning for me

. . . I came back four or five years later and all of a sudden they had meaning

. . . then I can talk about it, read about it, give meaning to that experience

. . . it's a sense of connectedness with the whole process

. . . I see education as an enterprise that's concerned with making meanings in the plural possible by helping people to think within the various forms in which meanings "carry"

How is meaning viewed? It is something we translate into, assign, bring, extract. Meaning is not seen as an intrinsic property; it is assigned by the actor in unison with the completion of a pattern, picture or gestalt.

The assignment of meaning to an event or circumstance appeared to be as an interaction of experience and purpose. Marc Roberts, reflecting on Pribram's work on the holographic nature of the brain, observed: "every learner has to adapt the pictures in their head, pictures that they are imagining." People are meaning makers. These pictures or images were composed of experience and purpose acting in concert.

Experience may be thought of as the curriculum of learning. Each of the participants spoke of the importance of experience in the creation of readiness, accumulation of knowledge, development of wisdom. Experience is not something we passively amass. It does, however, provide us with the opportunity for personal knowing. Ralph Tyler gives an example of how this knowing comes about through experience.

. . . in learning, it's shown that one does not apply a general principle, unless he has some experience with the situation to be sure how it's applied.

Against what set of criteria is experience sifted and evaluated? To these participants it might be one borne of purpose. These are individuals with a strong sense of purpose, as their language suggests

> . . . there were things that were left undone . . . and I made a commitment to do something about these unknown things.
>
> . . . if there is something, a little director down deep inside, it's putting me on course and setting me in certain directions . . .
>
> . . . I'd like to be a part of it . . . teaching people how to use their brain, how to learn.
>
> . . . My major job is to create context for people to find that joy in learning and bring down the barriers
>
> . . . we each have a spirit in us of which we are responsible . . . and we each have our own things to do and it's important that we each do our own thing the best we can do it
>
> . . . so that every lesson is a problem, every day is learning, every encounter with kids is an experience

Participants were asked to discuss their legacies as a means of revealing purpose. These legacies were like a set of blueprints for carrying out their purposes. No one described a desired legacy such as reading or mathematics program, a legacy that could be understood as a product. All legacies were processes, all involved interaction patterns among individuals, such as problem-solving, team efforts, participatory decision-making, interactive approaches to policy-making. All involved causing individuals to think in different ways, about the

purposes of programs or ideas, the nature of inquiry and challenge, integration of ideas and actions, policy as social change, self-reflection as growth. All involved persuasion and facilitation. All required substantial personal power. Each revealed a clear intentionality about purpose.

ASSUMPTION 5: Experience must be processed through self-reflection, analysis and critique.

Participants saw the learner as actively engaged with experiences, assisted by self-reflection, analysis and critique. These are the engaging elements. "They have to become their own worst enemies," remarked John Goodlad. Or, at least your own best critic.

Almost all of the participants spoke of the role of experience and self-critique. Accordingly, the participants view experience, molded, weighted, evaluated by the processes of self-reflection, analysis and critique as yielding mounting readiness for increasingly complex experience, increased skill and wisdom.

The importance of these processes lies not only in their role in the honing and screening of experience, but their role in the creation and resolution of internal dissonance. These retrospective processes are used by the participants as a means of identifying discrepancies and lodging argument and internal dialogue with oneself.

ASSUMPTION 6: The creation and resolution of cognitive dissonance is a critical element in learning.

ASSUMPTION 7: Learners seek cognitive dissonance.

> There are individualistic [learning experiences] that occur when you struggle with the problem for a long time and begin to see the daylight and work your way through it and begin to find a way of organizing it . . . those are probably the most satisfying. (Goodlad)

Cognitive dissonance is a term originated by Festinger (1957), and applied broadly to education and teacher training by Lieberman and Shiman (1974), Flanders (1970), Parsons (1978), and Joyce (1981). The term is generally used to refer to a change in an individual's cognitive "map" prompted by discrepant information. This creates a state of dissonance, or disequilibrium which may result in a modification of behavior on the part of the individual in order to restore consonance by bringing the old behaviors and new information into congruence. The researcher will admit unabashedly that she has stolen the phrase from Festinger, whisked it away, stripped it of some of its structuralism, and played with its reformation. "Cognitive dissonance" is used to mean a state of disequilibrium resulting from a discrepant event, experience or idea that is in variance with the current understandings or images held by an individual. The drive for equilibrium is a temporary state, with the moment of consonance being accompanied by satisfaction or elation. However, the continuation of consonance creates restlessness and dissatisfaction, so that dissonance will be sought or self-induced. This is true for the participants; whether it is true for most individuals is highly speculative.

Cognitive dissonance is the critical element in the "best learning experiences described by participants." The individuals

were challenged to see themselves differently because of some critique or validation from another person, an event in which their usual responses were not adequate or appropriate, or a powerful idea that altered their thinking. The satisfaction experienced by resolving this disequilibrium, solving the puzzle, or creating a new approach is fundamental to understanding their actions.

The actions of most interest here are those designs for the learning of others. Each of the approaches that they support provided opportunities for cognitive dissonance. Such a state can be created by the most ordinary forms of feedback and interaction to the most complex means of inquiry, research and problem-solving. Each approach includes one or more of these forms. The provisions for cognitive dissonance existed in each of the staff development approaches: 1) school improvement, collaborative, problem-solving; 2) instructional methodology, product-oriented; 3) teacher-center, teacher-advisor (as personal growth models).

The best learning for these participants resulted from the resolution of cognitive dissonance; the staff development approaches that they recommend make provision for the creation of cognitive dissonance; and their own tools for retrospection and thinking assist them in both the creation and resolution of such dissonance.

ASSUMPTION 8: Significant learning results in the transformation of the self.

ASSUMPTION 9: The emerging self and learning are synergistically related.

ASSUMPTION 10: Relationships are important in the emergence of the self.

ASSUMPTION 11: Learning is a process of emancipation.

ASSUMPTION 12: Learning is a self-directing process.

The data abound with comments about the changing of the self. Transformation is not just adding to what you already are. Such change is not adding on to an internal structure or map, but actually altering the self. It is being different.

Such transformation was recounted most vividly in the description of Significant Learning Experiences. In recalling those experiences, individuals spoke of seeing themselves differently. They had demonstrated capabilities that they didn't know they had, they had begun to think, they saw themselves and the world differently. Many who did not describe a Significant Learning Experience in terms of a dramatic event, used the same language to describe learning experiences surrounding a struggle, or in relationship with someone else.

What influences how the self emerges in the learning process? Several factors will be examined: relationships, persuasion, power, risk, struggle. Each of these plays an essential role in the identity-formation of the participants.

As Jane Stallings talked about her relationship with her mentor who had given her confidence and tools as a researcher and thinker, she suddenly exclaimed, "He set me free!" This process of emancipation is frequently a dimension of relationships, especially mentoring ones. Although she had suspected that her thinking about ideas was valid, it took the validation of another

individual to free her from her own doubts and hesitancies. Validation, challenge, support, critique, all forms of feedback that are critical to the formation of the self. Nearly half of the participants rejected the concept of mentoring as threatening to one's autonomy, yet all but three spoke of mentoring relationships that were important to them. This love-hate relationship with the idea of mentors is understandable given that they had temporarily experienced a somewhat dependent role. For these individuals who prize self-direction above all else, that must have been disconcerting. But it was also short-lived. Linda Bond referred to such relationships as a way to build her identity; first the modeling and counsel, then the differentiation. Each act of differentiation more clearly defining the self.

The mentoring associations usually became colleagial very soon, joining with other newly formed colleagial relationships. The arrangement now becomes reciprocal. Ideas were mutually shared and explored, critique honestly given. Those relationships that did not include honest critique did not last. A new kind of information is now available to the individual, "what do I have of value to offer?" They provide what they themselves need: validation, challenge, support, critique. The way they learn is how they interact with others.

Further, how they learn is how they persuade. In describing the approaches for convincing a respected opponent, the congruence of approach with learning style was striking. The rational learner used a direct rational approach, the more holistic

learner uses common ground or familiar framing. The individual who created a critical mass in designing staff development, did so in persuading. In the act of persuasion, individuals come to understand their own personal power. "I've had very little success in arguing with people," commented one participant. "I wouldn't be able to persuade him intellectually because that would never work," responded another. Where does one's power lie? In direct rational argument? in political maneuvering? in gentle persuasion? in understanding another point of view? Whatever the verdict, one's power, as well as values, become more defined.

"You have to try to disprove yourself, because what you're interested in is really knowing rather than being right," remarked Barbara Bundy. We learn by taking risks and making mistakes observed Paul Berman. You have to be "your own worst enemy," insisted John Goodlad. Defending a static ego is of little interest to these participants. Learning is the aim. An idea stands when it is explored, challenged and battered, not because it is the idea of the individual.

"Significant things are going to be hard," remarked Bruce Joyce. Wilson Riles knew that important learnings and achievement meant struggle. Gary Hart spoke of struggle, as did William Tikunoff, Linda Bond and William Gerritz. If it were too easy, it must be trivial. This understanding meant that individuals in this study usually welcomed instead of avoided struggle. They knew the payoff in satisfaction would be worth it. And, again,

they would know things about themselves that they didn't know before--or that were not true before.

As noted above, these participants seek cognitive dissonance, that which is lodged in the feedback of colleagues and opponents, of mistakes, risks, and struggle. For this is fodder for the emerging self, this is how it is formed and transformed. The language of the interviews and the interpretations of the metaphors confirm these impressions.

If fears are not found in the usual places (making mistakes, being criticized), where is it to be found? There is indication that the primary worry of these individuals is that, at some point or age, they will lose their ability to learn. Several lamented that there was not enough time, one sought safety in the idea that he could go on learning, John Goodlad spoke of Buckminister Fuller and Ralph Tyler. Ralph Tyler told us how it is done. Learning is equated with living, one is of little use without the other.

Gerritz remembered the work of a German anthropologist, Tinbergen, who developed a concept known as "functionslost" which means that which gives survival value to a particular species is that from which they intrinsically get pleasure. And for human beings, he stresses, it is our ability to learn.

These participants find survival value in learning. They understand how they learn and how to seek it out. They further understand that the significant learning-significant growth they seek results in the transformation of the self. It is directional, but without a set route.

ASSUMPTION 13: Adult development is not automatic, but is a function of emancipation, purpose, and self-critique.

ASSUMPTION 14: How adults learn, derive meaning, identify interests, and find purpose is not considered developmental.

If learning is seen by the participants as directional with significant transformative opportunities along the way, what does this say for the concept of "developmentalism"? Developmentalism as it has come to be applied, implies that individuals grow along a path that is continually unfolding in a systematic way, often age-dependent. As indicated by the language in this study, eight of the participants have integrated these concepts into their thinking about learning. All others had faith in the abilities of individuals to grow under certain circumstances. The data in this study do support some aspects of developmentalism, while providing no support for others. These will be examined separately.

The findings support the notion that learning is viewed as directional, propelled by purpose, pleasure, an inner drive that parallels Maslow's "actualizing" process. Living and learning are inexplicably intertwined. Growth is not seen as automatic, as a natural process of adulthood. The self must be emancipated from barriers and defenses that inhibit learning. There are indications that, if one engages in self-critique, analysis, reflection, then as one matures,

- interaction with the environment is increasingly complex, yet refined;
- understanding of one's own learning increases;

- knowledge of and confidence in one's own abilities increases;
- there is growing commitment to values and ideas.

There is no support in the data in this study to indicate that the following factors are developmental:

- how we learn
- primary learning interests (as different from situational interests)
- purpose
- how we derive meaning

Most of the best learning experiences that were reported, or learning approaches that were reflected upon, occurred in young adulthood. There was no indication that the approach that was seen as excellent then was not the same approach considered excellent today. On the contrary, how participants learned was highly congruent throughout their lives.

Many reported that they had recurring learning interests that were the same as they had had as a child. This is not to suggest that situational interests didn't override these on many occasions. Learning a new job, parenting, doing research for a book, all dominated the learning scene from time to time--but those recurring interests kept reoccurring.

Purpose was very much a constant factor in what people chose to do or not do. As indicated earlier, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest the sources of these purposes, but they seemed to be present since their youth. For some reason, these individuals seemed to move to what Kohlberg theorized as the higher levels of moral development early in their lives. It is

also important to note that purpose influenced their entry into education. These were not individuals, for the most part, who sought another career, fell short, and "settled" for education. They were people, however, who often felt intellectually stifled in the classroom and sought a broader arena.

How individuals derive meaning from their lives is highly consistent with how they learn. It is understood in this study as the interplay between experience and purpose. What is meaningful seemed to change, but not how they derived that meaning.

The data in this study support some of the current thinking on developmentalism and challenges others.

ASSUMPTION 15: Language development and thought are interrelated and important to self-direction.

> I can remember when I learned to think . . . I was a sophomore in college listening in an English class to a lecture and suddenly being conscious of processes going through my head that were different than I had experienced before. (Mesa)

One of the most intriguing of the serendipitous findings in this study is the role of English teachers in the learning of participants from minority cultures. To Charlie Mae Knight (Black), Wilson Riles (Black), Pete Mesa (Mexican) and William Tikunoff (Russian), their high school or college English teacher was the individual most instrumental in their learning to use the English language as a medium of thought and learning. To Knight, Riles and Tikunoff, these teachers were mentors. To Knight and Riles and Mesa these episodes occurred in college.

Wilson Riles, in reflecting upon the importance of a particular English teacher, pointed out that if you don't have support and appropriate models at home, the "schools become it." Dan Lortie (1975) has also pointed out the prominence of modeling from teachers among individuals from minority cultures where there may have been fewer models of achievement.

"For someone in my culture to gain the audacity to believe that they can think and use knowledge to solve problems is unusual," points out Pete Mesa. He comments further:

> In other cultures, that's not at all audacious, that is what you are socialized to do. I think that happens in the Jewish culture. I think it happens in the typical American culture, but in the Mexican culture it's really audacious to do it because the knowledge and wisdom resides in the priests and in authority. <u>You do not believe that it resides in you</u>.

The issue of where wisdom--and therefore power--resides is a critical one. Mesa explained further that among people from traditional, minority or low-status cultures one way that you keep in your place, stay within bounds, is to believe that knowledge resides in others.

After discovering this phenomenon, the researcher discussed it with Ralph Tyler. His observation was that low-status families, particularly minorities, have often learned to use language to communicate through free association (this happened, then this happened) rather than as a means of thinking. "The kids never have the business of 'why,' why would this happen or why do you know it's true. I'd listen to mothers talk to their children . . . and they do not talk about thinking." The discussion continues.

researcher: Would you speculate that the reason many of these striking experiences were with English teachers is that it had to do with the use of the language in thinking?

Tyler: Yes, I think that's true. The English teacher or any language teacher has to make distinctions about words and why and you've got to explain, especially if the language is different . . . probably the first persons that raised questions about 'why' were English teachers.

The modeling provided by teachers, the audacity to think that thought and power resides within and the use of language in thought--probably all contributing factors to understanding the importance of English teachers in the lives of participants from minority cultures.

Although the sample above is too small to draw conclusions, the findings are crisp enough to warrant serious examination. The findings in regard to women are less clear.

It would appear that the role of mentors, and emancipation through those relationships, are more important to minorities and to women in this study than to Caucasian men. It does not take a great deal of speculation to understand why this might be the case. The cultural imperative for women, even more so in the past, is similar to that experienced in minority cultures. The number of acceptable roles for women outside the home has been narrow, teaching being one of the most respectable. Power and thought (at least logic) has been the monopoly of men, as has "permission-giving." The emancipation process involved was primarily one of providing self-confidence, belief in one's ability to think and solve problems. The mentors were all men.

This is an interesting area for further investigation as most of the research on adult learning and development has been done with men.

Implications and Recommendations

Although the implications of this study for research on adult learning and policy making are far-reaching, this paper will only explore implications in the areas of Higher Education and Learning in the Workplace, Staff Development and Adult Learning and Networking.

Higher Education and Learning in the Workplace

If educators are going to function as learners in the workplace, universities must assume a larger share of the responsibility toward that end. Pre-service, as well as continuing service, needs to be transformed, at least redesigned, to respond to what is now known about adult learning, improving schools and staff development. Within the next five years, the turnover in the teaching and administrative staffs will be substantial. This will mean that the work of universities with new staff will soon be felt more keenly than it has been for several years. Now is the time for that influence to be thoughtfully considered and updated.

The university needs to take a leading role in changing what it means to be a teacher. This is a large order. Clearly, the models of early teachers and the cultural norm for teaching has a tremendous influence upon the individuals who choose to enter the teaching field. In fact, as Lortie (1975) has pointed out, those

norms may well account for the major reasons that individuals enter the field at all. Therefore, universities need to reduce the ease of entry into the profession. There is little in the way of defensibility for universities who grant teaching credentials to those who are less than able. If the community of higher education could reach consensus on expectations, some of the screening would take care of itself.

As a start toward the shifting of the norms of teaching, the following experiences during pre-service education could help:

- Students need to be taught how to "study the client". They must understand, firsthand, how children learn. Skills in classroom observation and analysis of data are important. Being an observer and a researcher ought to be an expectation for all educators.
- Students must be taught basic instructional methodology. The findings of Madeline Hunter, Jane Stallings, Bruce Joyce, Art Costa and others should not have to be learned after students enter the profession. Why should districts and counties bear the expense for teaching teachers how to teach? (New teachers, specifically).
- Students must understand themselves as adult learners. It is essential to understand that how you learn is how you teach. Therefore, students must understand how they learn and how to broaden their teaching repertoire in order to teach those children with different learning styles.
- Students must be immersed in the ecology of the schools. University supervisors who park their cars and walk directly

to room 10 and out again model the poorest in thinking about what it is to be a member of a school community. Students must be required to audit or join in staff meetings, School Site Council meetings, or serve on committees. They must be aware that to be a teacher is to be a member of a social community.

- Students must be taught how to get and give feedback. Being assigned to more than one "master teacher" could help in that the expectation would be to visit others' classes and have other teachers visit them. A conscious effort must be made to encourage master teachers to provide direct feedback to students and to help students respond to feedback appropriately.
- Students must enter into critical discourse about teaching and learning.

  Seminars for such dialogue must provide a forum in which to explore such questions as "How is meaning derived from schools, for learners of all ages?" "How do we negotiate theory and practice in the workplace?" "How do I continually identify resources to foster my own learning?"

These are but a few of the ideas that would begin to shift the norm of what it is to be a teacher. In order to do this, university instructors are morally obligated to update themselves in these areas.

Universities have a great deal to offer to continuing service as well. Currently, the average age of teachers in many

areas within the profession is over 50. Many of these individuals have been away from colleges and universities for 20 or more years. The skills listed for pre-service emphasis are needed by these individuals. Some schools are providing some of them, most are not. Universities, staffed with expertise and usually having more flexible time, could help to provide many of these skills, particularly if in conjunction with teacher centers. Training programs can be brought closer to the schools and districts. One of the most important undertakings, that of collaborative research, could actually help to alter how a school looks at itself by systematically helping staffs to provide cognitive dissonance through problem-solving and research.

As universities meet their pre-service obligations and are actively engaged in helping schools to design and carry out staff development programs, the following guidelines should be kept in mind.

Staff Development and Adult Learning

This section will discuss the implications of the findings of this study for staff development and suggest "guidelines" for staff development planning. This is not to be confused with a "model," for the researcher agrees with Paul Berman when he says that "some things work sometimes." A staff development program, or any program, cannot be context-free, thus the need is to accept any recommendations as guiding principles, rather than essential checklists.

The indications in this study are that those who influence the field of staff development are projecting their assumptions about their own learning unto others. This means that the ideas and programs that influence the field are equally diverse. Because the meaning of this diversity has not been negotiated (see the section on Networking), each approach has not necessarily been integrated with others, therefore meeting the diverse needs of adult learners. Each approach accumulates followers of like mind and in this observation lies the danger to staff development. This phenomenon means that many school settings will not provide the broad experiences essential to adult learning, nor might some provide the needed instruction in instructional skills. Recently, a Bay Area district was engaged in hiring a principal. After screening from more than 80 candidates, 13 were selected for interview and the evaluation of a teaching episode shown on videotape. Each of the 13 used the Madeline Hunter approach to instructional supervision, and one replied, "I like the Madeline Hunter approach because it is scientific. It takes the art (guess?) out of teaching. We now know there is a right way to teach." This comment would be as outrageous to Madeline Hunter as it is to the researcher; however, it typifies the kinds of followers that a particular approach can attract. Yet, we are in the business of educating kids and we do need teachers who are able to use the best available skills to do just that. If we are to escape the mentality of this would-be principal, it is essential that one

approach not stand alone. A school must consider the needs of the children, the adults, and the institution.

GUIDELINE #1 — Schools need to provide instructional skill development within an environment that emphasizes institutional and personal growth.

The school staff, with input from the community, students, and theory, reach consensus on the mission (vision) and goals of the school. The principal is trained in such consensus building skills. Other needed skills, such as the ones identified above under "higher education," are agreed upon and school improvement plans, as well as personal learning plans, are developed.

GUIDELINE #2 — The principal must create, or assist in the creation of, a vision within which a program consensus can be built.

Without a vision as context, goal-setting is somewhat meaningless because these goals become linear moves disconnected from the larger "dream." Principals must articulate the vision in every form in order to create an intentionality for change. Leadership must help alter the patterns within the institution that give meaning to individuals and their work. Additionally, they must:

- model the intended vision through behavior, communication, questioning, feedback, self-critique
- create a critical mass
- participate actively
- orchestrate reward systems
- adapt or adjust directions
- stimulate inquiry and shared problem-solving
- excite individuals to personal growth

Each of these skills relays a similar message: that the vision is an integrated part of the principal's and school's philosophy. That approach promotes school-wide improvement, as well as personal growth. Those who pursue school improvement without attention to personal growth, as some of our participants do, will not experience teachers as being <u>different</u> in their work.

GUIDELINE #3 Adult learning within a school environment must provide for cognitive dissonance, self-critique, reflection and self-direction.

Such an undertaking considers the context, yet honors self-direction. Problem-solving is a means of improving the school and also a means of providing the essential dissonance needed for adult learning. Additionally, some such pursuits must be private, spontaneous, allowing for the "gestalting" experiences of holistic learners. The institutional patterns from which individuals derive meaning are examined, discussed and altered. This risky business takes place in a supportive environment.

GUIDELINE #4 The school norm must be one in which mutual critique and support is expected and discussed.

Relationships are important to learning and ought to be actively developed within the school setting. For young teachers, mentors are important; for more mature teachers, reciprocal colleagial relationships are important. Such relationships can offer critique and support, both of which lead to learning and teaching to be observed, data to be analyzed, questions to be addressed. In this quest for knowing, outside support and perspectives can also be important.

GUIDELINE #5 The schools and districts need to seek assistance and partnerships with other resources, such as teachers centers, county offices, universities and research and development centers.

It is renewing to enter into the venture of inquiry in partnership with others. Such relationships can validate experience, help in the process of identity and the interpretation of what it is to be a teacher. For the school environment as a whole, such expertise can provide theory, skills in collaborative research and training expertise. The resources are there. All schools have to do, for the most part, is to ask.

The principles discussed above in the five guidelines are not new. However, the researcher has not encountered them so closely linked to adult learning before. Some of the participants in this study--those who have broadened and deepened their own styles and approaches--have produced works that incorporate these ideas either directly or indirectly. Among the best are the ASCD publication, Moving Toward Self-Directed Learning, edited by Delmo Della Dora; Cognition and Curriculum by Elliot Eisner; The Structure of School Improvement by Bruce Joyce; The Framework for Effective Staff Development by Dale Lambert; and the forthcoming publications, A Place Called School by John Goodlad, and Some Things Work Sometimes, by Paul Berman.

The foregoing discussion and accompanying recommendations necessitate a shared vision, a common field of understanding within which to bring such ideas to reality. This is the function of networking.

Networking

> . . . networks can go beyond the mere transfer of data into the creation and exchange of knowledge. As each person in a network takes in new information, he or she synthesizes it and comes up with other, new ideas. Networks share the newly forged thoughts and ideas.
>
> John Naisbett, Megatrends (1975: 194)

Many of the participants in this study are linked informally with each other and do an excellent job of transferring data, they each "read each other." Many of them, working in small clusters, are in the business of the creation and exchange of knowledge and synthesis of ideas. For instance, John Goodlad and Ralph Tyler worked on the study of schooling together; Ralph Tyler, Delmo Della Dora, Pete Mesa, and Bruce Joyce have worked together, as do Gary Hart, Linda Bond, Paul Berman and Bruce Joyce. Madeline Hunter and Ralph Tyler are writing a portion of the new ASCD yearbook together, which includes a response and critique by Art Costa. Karen Kent, Priscilla Galagaran, Dale Lambert, William Gerritz and Carolyn Horan work together. William Gerritz and Bruce Joyce work with Jane Stallings. Eight participants, including most policy-makers, mentioned the work of Bruce Joyce; all the work being done in the area of instructional skills include portions of the work of Madeline Hunter or Jane Stallings. William Tikunoff works with the research community at Stanford, as does Carol Choye, and disseminates research findings through the National Institute of Education. This is probably just the tip of the iceberg. Clearly, networks are present. They reach into the board rooms of school districts and counties,

the state department, the halls of the legislature, and the literature of the profession.

In spite of this well-oiled web, there is a need for even more "newly forged thoughts and ideas." These participants share a vision about what adult learning could be, although they do not agree on the means for carving out this vision. As the findings indicate, the learning styles of the participants influence the programs that they promote, and therefore the followers that they amass. The existence, and the responsibility of this network regarding the direction of staff development, needs to be brought to a more conscious level. Their shared vision provides a field in which the future of staff development can be negotiated. A consensus needs to be reached through critical discourse that recognizes that both major approaches that thread throughout this study (regarding where "truth" is lodged), convergent and divergent, must be an on-going part of how adult learning in schools happen. This dialogue needs to be held with others, policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, who are deeply affected by the outcome.

This is a call for action. This action necessitates a movement beyond the "how to's" of staff development into a discussion of the goals of adult learning. Before our vision is blurred by the flurry for simplistic reform, we must move above the madding crowd and decide what it is all about.

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